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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 25 November 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. GANEV (Bulgaria)

- Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States: draft resolution

- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples [18] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Special Committee on the Situation with Regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

  (b) Reports of the Secretary-General

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(c) Draft resolutions

(d) Report of the Fifth Committee

- Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples: report of the Fourth Committee [18] (continued)

- Personnel questions: report of the Fifth Committee (Part I) [112]

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 139

COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN MILITARY FORCES FROM THE TERRITORIES OF THE BALTIC STATES: DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/47/L.19)

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, His Excellency Mr. Ivars Godmanis, in the course of which he will introduce draft resolution A/47/L.19.

Mr. Ivars Godmanis, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I now call on the Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia.

Mr. GODMANIS (Latvia): I have the honour to introduce, on behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia, a draft resolution under item 139 of the General Assembly's agenda for the forty-seventh session, entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States".

The draft resolution, the first to be submitted by the Baltic States to the General Assembly, addresses the most important and urgent matter now confronting them - the continued illegal presence of the military forces of the former Soviet Union on the territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Since the spring of 1990 the complete restoration of sovereignty and independence has been the principal goal of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The presence of foreign military forces on the territories of the Baltic States without their consent is incompatible with their sovereignty and independence. The complete withdrawal of these foreign military forces is essential for Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian sovereignty and independence.

(Mr. Godmanis, Latvia)

During this century the Baltic States have been subjected to repeated attacks on their sovereignty by their larger neighbours. Their size and geography determine the fact that the Baltic States will not be a match for a military super-Power. Therefore, to maintain their national security, the Baltic States will have to depend on multilateral security guarantees and hope that their neighbours will conduct their international relations according to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Besides the threat to national security inherent in the presence of foreign military forces on their territories, the presence of such forces creates other problems. Most importantly, their presence contributes to strained relations between the various ethnic groups in the Baltic States. The presence of the foreign military forces generates uncertainty and discourages foreign investment in the three countries. At the same time, resources controlled by these forces are unavailable to the people of the Baltic States. Furthermore, the damage to the environment that has been caused by the foreign military forces cannot be fully estimated, nor can remedial procedures begin because of lack of access to the polluted bases.

It is the position of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania that the presence of foreign military forces on their territories is a matter not only of their sovereignty and independence, but also of international peace and security. The Baltic States have repeatedly apprised the Security Council, as well as all Members of the United Nations, of their concerns. Situations in other parts of the former Soviet Union - for example, in Moldova - serve as lessons on the potential threat to the Baltic States. A breakdown of peace and security in the Baltic region would affect not only Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but other parts of Europe as well.

(Mr. Godmanis, Latvia)

The great quantities of arms and munitions stocked in the Baltic States also present a danger, because the Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania neither control nor supervise these weapons. Moreover, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are unable to monitor weapons transfers in their territories because of lack of access to the bases controlled by the foreign military forces.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are demanding the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from their territories in order to reverse a breach of international law. The former Soviet military forces were first stationed in the Baltic States as a result of the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact on 23 August 1939. Under the terms of a secret protocol to the Pact, the Baltic States were relegated to the Soviet Union's sphere of influence and subsequently annexed by the Soviet Union. Beginning in the spring of 1990, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania took steps to restore their sovereignty and independence, thus reversing some of the consequences of these illegal acts. The complete withdrawal of former Soviet military forces from the Baltic States will confirm with deeds the recognition of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian sovereignty and independence by the Russian Federation.

Today, there are approximately 100,000 former Soviet military personnel stationed on the territories of the Baltic States. These military forces move within and among the territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania without the permission or even the advance knowledge of the Baltic Governments. Contrary to earlier agreements, new recruits have been overtly and covertly rotated into the Baltic States in order to replace departing troops. Military aircraft conduct unauthorized sorties in Baltic skies, endangering civil aviation, and continue to carry out bombing exercises with live ordnance.

(Mr. Godmanis, Latvia)

Cargo aircraft enter and depart Baltic territory without the knowledge and permission of the respective Baltic Governments. Ports, which once bustled with trade and commerce are now used by foreign military naval forces. Vessels that operate from these naval bases are outside the control of the local government, and have on occasion been transferred to third countries. In Latvia, the monitoring station at Ventspils is used to spy on third countries. Nuclear reactors, controlled by the foreign military forces in Estonia, are accessible neither to the Estonian Government nor to international inspectors.

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania recognize their responsibility to find peaceful solutions to the problem posed by the continued presence of the foreign military forces. Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania sought the removal of the foreign military forces through bilateral negotiations with the Russian Federation, which in January 1992, assumed jurisdiction over the former Soviet military forces stationed in the Baltic States.

In addition to bilateral negotiations, the Baltic States have attempted to solve this problem on the regional level, in particular through the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). At the CSCE meeting in Helsinki on 9 and 10 July 1992 the participating States, including the three Baltic States and the Russian Federation, adopted the "Helsinki Document 1992 - The Challenges of Change". In paragraph 15, the CSCE expressed

> "support for efforts by CSCE participating States to remove, in a peaceful manner and through negotiations, the problems that remain from the past, like the stationing of foreign armed forces on the territories of the Baltic States without the required consent of those countries." (A/47/361, para. 15)

(Mr. Godmanis, Latvia)

Paragraph 15 continues

"Therefore, in line with basic principles of international law and in order to prevent any possible conflict, we call on the participating States concerned to conclude, without delay, appropriate bilateral agreements, including timetables, for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of such foreign troops from the territories of the Baltic States." (ibid.)

The agreements signed by the Defence Ministers of Lithuania and the Russian Federation, following the adoption of the Helsinki Document 1992, were encouraging. These agreements provided that the former Soviet military forces stationed in Lithuania would be completely withdrawn by 31 August 1993. The Baltic States welcome these agreements and hope that this binding commitment will be carried out in full.

It may be noted that in the negotiations between Estonia and the Russian Federation and between Latvia and the Russian Federation a number of issues have been provisionally resolved. Unfortunately, there is an absence of any agreement on primary issues, such as the final date of complete withdrawal, the timetable and manner of withdrawal and the Russian Federation's wish to maintain "strategic" bases in the Baltic States.

Regrettably, the agreement reached at the CSCE in July 1992 and the Lithuanian-Russian agreements of September 1992 were recently called into question when, by decree, the President of the Russian Federation suspended the withdrawal of military forces from the Baltic States. The decree, which was issued one day after the signing of a Latvian-Russian economic agreement, made the implementation of economic agreements between the Russian Federation and the Baltic States conditional on the granting of social guarantees by the

(Mr. Godmanis, Latvia)

Baltic States to the foreign military forces. Equally disturbing were the provisions of the decree, which appeared to link the Russian Federation's commitment completely to withdraw the military forces from the Baltic States with the resolution of other issues. The Baltic States hope that the Russian Federation, as a CSCE participating State, will respect the agreement reached in Helsinki.

In submitting the draft resolution to the General Assembly, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania seek to build on the common ground reached at the CSCE, as stated in the Helsinki Document 1992. In fact, paragraph 15 has been restated in the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution. The Baltic States expect that, with the adoption of the draft resolution, the commitment reached at the CSCE will be raised from the regional level to the global level.

Furthermore, the Baltic States hope to establish a formal linkage between regional and global efforts to remove the foreign military forces. The Helsinki Document 1992 states, and the draft resolution reflects

> "that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe is a regional arrangement in the sense of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and as such provides an important link between European and global security." (A/47/L.19, eleventh preambular paragraph)

While promoting this linkage in the text of their draft resolution, the Baltic States do not expect the United Nations to assume a primary role in the effort to remove the foreign military forces from their territories. Rather, the Baltic States envision the role of the United Nations to be a complementary one to that already assumed by the CSCE. We expect that the role of regional organizations and the United Nations will continue to be secondary to the bilateral negotiations. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will continue to negotiate with the Russian Federation in good faith.

(Mr. Godmanis, Latvia)

The Baltic States, in turning to the United Nations, principally intend the draft resolution to further the implementation of a policy of preventive diplomacy in a situation in which peace and security might be endangered if a solution is not found in time. With reference to the Secretary-General's report, "An Agenda for Peace", it is hoped that, with some participation by the United Nations, a measure of transparency will be created in the relations between the Baltic States and the Russian Federation, particularly in the process of the bilateral negotiations on the complete withdrawal of former Soviet military forces from the territories of the Baltic States.

The Baltic States have consistently sought to promote transparency in this process. Information on the matter of the foreign military forces, including statements adopted by the Baltic Council, has been forwarded to the Member States. In submitting the draft resolution, the Baltic States hope that the General Assembly will further promote transparency of the negotiation process, specifically by requesting the Secretary-General to report on the progress towards the implementation of the draft resolution.

(Mr. Godmanis, Latvia)

A shortage of housing in the Russian Federation for the Soviet military forces is a reason often expressed for delaying withdrawal from the Baltic States. The Baltic States dispute the validity of such an assertion. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have repeatedly offered to assist in the construction of housing in the Russian Federation. Proposals for housing construction in the Russian Federation have been prepared by other States as well. With the exception of a Lithuanian commercial company, which has been engaged to participate in housing construction in Kaliningrad, the Russian Federation has generally not responded to the various proposals to help with housing construction.

It is worth repeating a statement by the leaders of the Group of 7 in Munich on 7 July 1992 that a State, despite economic difficulties,

> "must not be allowed to hinder the application of the principle of international law to the effect that military forces may not be stationed on the territory of another State without its consent".

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania seek two assurances: first, that their sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity will be respected; and, secondly, that a threat to international peace and security will be removed from their territories. In this connection, the Baltic States view with concern the official statement by the Russian Federation's Defence Minister, General Pavel Grachev, in which he defined all areas of the former Soviet Union as within the Russian "sphere of interest" with the "corresponding right" to intervene militarily. Such a statement resembles the Brezhnev doctrine and its antecedent political theories which were used as a pretext for Soviet military aggression against other States.

(Mr. Godmanis, Latvia)

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have great respect for the democratization process under way in the Russian Federation. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania do not want to see that process undermined. They understand and appreciate the efforts involved in overcoming the unavoidable difficulties of democratization. The withdrawal of foreign military forces would send a strong signal that there is a commitment to democracy and an abandonment of imperial practices that have long existed in our region.

I have the pleasure to report, on behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia, that all interested delegations have agreed to the text of the draft resolution and that it can be adopted without a vote. I wish to express my sincere thanks, on behalf of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, for the support for the draft resolution that we have received from Member States.

The people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, inhabitants of the shores of the Baltic Sea since time immemorial, wish to continue to develop free, independent and democratic societies. Having restored their independence, the Baltic States also wish to contribute to the peaceful development of international relations, as they did as members of the League of Nations. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, small States, hope that their larger neighbour will respect their wishes.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Latvia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ivars Godmanis, Prime Minister of Latvia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom): I am speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States on the item "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States".

(Mr. Richardson, United Kingdom)

We share the concern of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania over the continued presence on their soil of former Soviet forces. Now that these States have regained their freedom, we wish to help them to consolidate their sovereignty and independence, to develop as effective and free democracies with prosperous market economies, and to develop stable and harmonious relationships with their neighbours. The withdrawal of former Soviet forces will assist these processes.

Russia must withdraw its troops. In this there can be no argument. It must abide by its commitment to the early, complete and orderly withdrawal of these forces, in accordance with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) "Helsinki Document 1992 - The Challenges of Change". President Yeltsin's repetition of this commitment in his recent letter to the Secretary-General is a welcome declaration of intent.

We welcome the progress that has already been made. Russia has already removed a large number of its forces. We were encouraged by the Russian agreement of 8 September with Lithuania on a timetable for withdrawal of all forces from that country by 31 August 1993. We urge Russia to abide by this agreement and to agree to and implement similar accords with Estonia and Latvia, without linkage to other issues.

However, we were concerned at the recent decision to suspend temporarily the troop withdrawals. This decision has revived Baltic suspicions of Russian intentions. We understand Russia's concern over the practical difficulties it faces in arranging the withdrawal of its forces. But these concerns cannot stand in the way of the principle of international law that the presence of foreign troops on the territory of a sovereign State requires the consent of that State.

(Mr. Richardson, United Kingdom)

The European Community and its member States will support the resolution put forward by the Baltic States under this agenda item. We hope it will encourage all parties to continue their talks on troop withdrawals in a positive, constructive and non-confrontational fashion, so that a final agreement can be swiftly reached.

Mr. SARBANES (United States of America): The former Soviet Union's forcible attempt to annex Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia was one of the saddest acts in its history. The annexation of the Baltic States, which my Government never recognized, foreshadowed the cold war. It was appropriate that the end of the cold war coincided with the recognition by the Soviet Union and Russia of the independence and sovereignty of the Baltic countries.

The United States welcomes and will support the draft resolution before us, which we understand is acceptable to the Baltic and the Russian Governments. For Russia and the Baltic countries it represents a further important step. My Government believes that the continued presence of foreign forces in the territory of the Baltic countries without their permission is inconsistent with the Baltic countries' identities as fully sovereign and independent members of the international community. We welcome the Russian and the Baltic Governments' appreciation of that fact, along with the Russian Government's continued withdrawal of its forces and the successful conclusion of a troop withdrawal agreement with Lithuania.

(Mr. Sarbanes, United States)

We hope that similar agreements will shortly be concluded with Estonia and Latvia, establishing the earliest possible schedules for withdrawal. In expressing that hope, we would make clear our view that the withdrawal of Russian forces from the Baltic States increases rather than decreases Russia's security, because it confirms Russia's standing as a respected member of the democratic community.

We appreciate the historic issues which complicate relations between Russia and the Baltic countries, including the rights of ethnic Russians and other minorities in those countries. We welcome this draft resolution as positive evidence that the Baltic countries and Russia can come to terms with issues with seriousness and mutual understanding and in keeping with the Charter of this Organization and the Helsinki Final Act.

Mr. ERDŐS (Hungary) (interpretation from French): I am speaking, on the agenda item before us today, on behalf of a country which, thanks to the historic transformations that have taken place in the world and in Eastern Europe, has been able to regain its complete sovereignty and its full freedom of action and has taken the difficult path of a peaceful transition to the rule of law and parliamentary democracy. As members are aware, foreign military forces were stationed in Hungary for several decades. As a result of negotiations that began in the late 1980s, the last foreign soldier left Hungarian soil on 30 June 1991. That withdrawal was carried out with dignity and with the certainty on both sides that bilateral relations between Hungary and its great neighbour to the east were thereby relieved of a burden that represented a serious obstacle to the full normalization of relations between the two countries. Financial and environmental problems related to the stationing of those foreign military forces in Hungary have since been the

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

subject of serious negotiations, which have recently come to a happy conclusion with a settlement acceptable to both parties.

I have dwelt at some length on our own experience in this respect in order to indicate, first of all, the legitimacy of the call for the withdrawal of foreign military forces stationed in the territory of the Baltic countries without the consent of those countries, secondly, to highlight the importance of political and peaceful negotiations as a means of achieving that withdrawal and, lastly, to stress the vital need for flexibility and for all the parties concerned to seek appropriate modalities to carry out the withdrawal.

The draft resolution before us today is in fact the somewhat late swansong of a so-called non-aggression pact concluded in the late 1930s between two different and yet very similar totalitarian Powers, and especially of one of those secret protocols which had been at the origin of the division of Central Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea into spheres of influence. It was then that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania lost their independence and were incorporated into the USSR by pseudodemocratic means. The complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of those States puts a full stop to the imperial presence of a neighbour in those lands.

Just as in the case of my country, it is only on the basis of those countries' regaining their full sovereignty over their own territories that a new chapter in the relations between Russia and its Baltic neighbours can really begin. As in the case of my country, the total withdrawal of foreign military forces from those three countries will be the result of painstaking and intensive negotiations, which must be conducted in good faith, in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, tolerance and good-neighbourliness. In that process, it is imperative to face up unflinchingly to the burdensome and

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

complex heritage that the past has bequeathed to the countries concerned. It is necessary to recognize the legitimacy of the demands that foreign soldiers should at long last leave the three Baltic countries, just as it is vital to assess accurately the true dimensions and the gravity of the problems and concerns that such a withdrawal is likely to cause to one of the parties involved. In those negotiations, therefore, a pragmatic spirit must prevail over any considerations of an ideological nature.

We are sincerely gratified at the agreements concluded with regard to the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the region, as well as at the current bilateral talks aimed at such withdrawals. We are confident that the United Nations and, more specifically, the machinery of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) will be capable of making valuable contributions to the efforts undertaken to that end. We are greatly pleased to see the countries concerned, which have all rejoined the ranks of the community of democratic nations, declare their readiness to continue a political dialogue with a view to the signing of agreements relating to the withdrawal of those troops, and we regard the willingness of the leaders of the Russian Federation to withdraw their troops from the territories of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as a sign of the new times in which we are living and as a far-reaching change in Russia's attitude towards its geopolitical neighbours. None the less, a stable and lasting solution to the problems of concern to the countries of that region, including the problem of withdrawal of foreign military forces, can be achieved only on the basis of a shared will and a firm commitment to democratic values on the part of the parties concerned.

(Mr. Erdös, Hungary)

We pay tribute to all those who have taken an active part in the consultations on the draft resolution submitted by the three Baltic countries, and we are pleased that it is about to be adopted without a vote.

Mr. VORONTSOV (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): The Russian Federation advocates the development of full-fledged good-neighbourly relations with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia and is doing its utmost to ensure that existing problems in our relations are solved and to promote the continuous and irreversible development of such relations.

As members are aware, the Russian Federation has consistently taken a position in support of the Baltic States' attainment of independence. It was in fact the Russian leadership which halted in January of 1991 the attempt to reverse by force the process whereby Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia would attain independence, and in August of that same year Russia launched the process by which the Baltic States would gain international recognition.

We remain true to our policy of support for the independent, democratic development of those States and look upon them as our partners in the building of a new Europe.

Unfortunately, in the relations between Russia and the Baltic States there are a number of inherited problems which we shall have to solve jointly in a spirit of good-neighbourliness and good will and on the basis of an understanding of the sources and substance of the problems and difficulties our States face in this historically fateful but, at the same time, dramatic period of our development.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

One of those problems is the presence in the territory of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia of former Soviet military forces which the new democratic Russia did not send there but is now forced to take under its jurisdiction as the successor State to the Soviet Union.

President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation has repeatedly stated that our country has taken a clear and unambiguous decision to withdraw completely from the territories of the Baltic States the armed forces of the former USSR which it has taken under its jurisdiction. We are attempting to complete that withdrawal as quickly as is technically feasible in the light of the need for the simultaneous withdrawal from the territories of other foreign States of the Soviet troops over which Russia has assumed jurisdiction.

The Russian Federation has repeatedly assured the Baltic States and other States that it has no secret plans of any kind to delay the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic or to use that issue to bring pressure to bear on other aspects of their bilateral relations. That is confirmed by our policy in bilateral negotiations, in which we are focusing our efforts on seeking mutually acceptable practical solutions without politicizing the problem, which would, in our view, be not only completely unhelpful but in fact counterproductive.

As a result of those efforts, Russia and Lithuania have already agreed upon and signed a timetable for the withdrawal of the Russian Federation's armed forces from Lithuanian territory - which provides for completion of the withdrawal by 31 August 1993 - and two other related documents. Now we must reach an understanding on an inter-State agreement regulating a broad range of issues related to withdrawal of the troops.

Trying to meet the Baltic States halfway, the Russian party proposed arranging an accelerated withdrawal of the troops under Russian jurisdiction

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

from Latvia and Estonia before the end of 1994 - with the understanding, of course, that agreements would be reached on issues to ensure the orderly withdrawal of the troops and their normal functioning during the period of the withdrawal. We propose regulating, and embodying in appropriate agreements, inter alia, such problems as granting our armed forces during the withdrawal period some legal status essential for their normal daily activities, for providing transit guarantees for military shipments to Russia, guarantees for the legal protection and individual rights of military personnel and members of their families, mutually acceptable solutions of material and financial issues and, lastly, the inadmissibility of unilateral acts and discriminatory measures against Russian military personnel while the general agreements on withdrawal are being worked out.

It is our conviction that we are fully justified in raising these issues. I would recall that in the cases of other States of Central and Eastern Europe, when problems such as those I have mentioned have arisen, they have been solved fairly quickly in a spirit of cooperation and on the basis of compromise.

Evidence of our desire to solve the problem of troop withdrawal from the Baltic States as quickly as possible can be seen in the fact that Russia began the withdrawal even before the conclusion of inter-State agreements with the three Baltic States. Unfortunately, experience has shown that when legal, property, financial, transport and other issues related to the withdrawal of troops are not settled, it is impossible to ensure that the withdrawal will be orderly. The need for orderly withdrawal has been emphasized both in the declaration of the Helsinki Summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and in the draft resolution we are considering.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

In these circumstances, President Yeltsin of the Russian Federation was compelled to suspend temporarily the withdrawal of military forces from the territories of the Baltic States. That withdrawal will be resumed and carried out in accordance with a shortened and realistically feasible timetable immediately after the signing with Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia of inter-State agreements on a broad range of issues related to the withdrawal of troops.

As the President of the Russian Federation said in his press conference of 5 November 1992, the temporary suspension of the troop withdrawal should be seen not as a political decision but as a measure for creating social protection for the military personnel involved. The President emphasized that the withdrawal of Russian troops from Lithuania would be completed in accordance with the timetable that had been signed. The Head of the Russian State also made a proposal to the leaders of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia that they should meet at the negotiating table on the question of the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territories of the Baltic States.

Thus, no one should harbour any doubts as to the consistency of the Russian Federation's efforts aimed at the early conclusion of realistic agreements on the withdrawal of Russian armed forces from the Baltic countries.

The withdrawal of the armed forces under Russia's jurisdiction from the territories of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia is not the only problem in the building of our new relations with those States. We also have acute problems in the field of economic relations with regard to the severing of industrial and commercial ties and to radical structural reforms in our countries' economies. Those serious problems must also be solved as quickly as possible

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

on the basis of cooperation and understanding and with due regard for the interests of all sides.

Another complicated problem that is rooted in history is the permanent residence of a significant Russian-speaking population in the territories of the Baltic States. Unfortunately the situation concerning the rights of the Russian-speaking population in Latvia and Estonia gives cause for serious concern, for we are talking about 2 million people, many of whom were born there, have lived there all their lives, have raised their children and grandchildren there and have no other homeland. Yet their rights to work, to education, to housing, and the like have been left "up in the air". All of them are deeply concerned about the uncertainty of their situation. Some of them are afraid that things are heading towards the expulsion of members of the non-indigenous nationalities from those countries and that it is precisely for that purpose that manifestly discriminatory legislation is being drafted and, in some places, already being adopted. Such legislation is contrary to generally recognized international human-rights standards; thus, what is involved is actually the mass violation of human rights.

In these circumstances, the only reasonable alternative is, in our view, to make arrangements for the peaceful, equitable and dignified coexistence of all nationalities residing in the territories of Latvia and Estonia, which requires the abolition of legislative measures and the repudiation of actions that violate the rights of ethnic Russians. This question must be solved as a matter of urgency, and that is why it has been submitted to the United Nations by the President of the Russian Federation as an important and urgent item. But that is, of course, a separate issue which will be taken up in the Third Committee at this session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Vorontsov, Russian Federation)

We are determined to settle all the problems that have arisen in the new relations between Russia and the Baltic States in a spirit of cooperation and good-neighbourliness and in a responsible and constructive manner. That is the spirit in which talks were held between the delegations of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and the Russian Federation on the draft resolution contained in document A/47/L.19, which is before the General Assembly for adoption by consensus.

Mr. HAAKONSEN (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries - Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

The Nordic countries welcome this opportunity for the General Assembly to discuss the item on our agenda today, entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States".

The early, orderly and complete withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic States in compliance with the Helsinki Document 1992 adopted by the July Summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is essential for the consolidation of the regained independence of the Baltic States and for stability and security in the whole region.

We welcome the fact that a significant number of troops have already left the Baltic States. We also welcome the negotiations under way between the Russian Federation and the Baltic States on the withdrawal of troops, and in particular the agreement between Lithuania and Russia on a timetable for the withdrawal of troops from that country by August 1993. It is of the greatest importance that Russia should conclude corresponding agreements with Estonia and Latvia at the earliest possible time.

The Nordic countries noted with satisfaction the statement in the recent letter from President Yeltsin to the Secretary-General to the effect that

(Mr. Haakonsen, Denmark)

Russia is committed to withdrawing troops from the Baltic States in accordance with international law and the wishes of those States.

However, we are concerned at statements that the withdrawal of troops has been suspended temporarily. We take it for granted that the withdrawal of troops will continue without further delay, in accordance with the Helsinki Document 1992. The Baltic countries' demand for a withdrawal of troops is legitimate and cannot be linked to the solution of any other political issue.

The Nordic countries understand the practical, social and economic problems Russia faces in connection with the withdrawal of troops, and we realize that outside assistance to alleviate some of these difficulties could be helpful. However, these difficulties cannot be used as an excuse for not withdrawing the troops.

The Nordic countries support the consensus draft resolution put forward under this agenda item by the Baltic States following successful consultations with the Russian Federation. The adoption of this draft resolution underscores the importance the international community attaches to the withdrawal of those troops in compliance with the principle of international law, as expressed by CSCE among others, that the presence of foreign troops in the territory of a sovereign State requires the consent of that State.

We hope that this draft resolution will bring new impetus to the negotiations, leading to an early, orderly and complete withdrawal of those troops.

Mrs. FRECHETTE (Canada): I have the honour to speak on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Our three countries are pleased to support the consensus draft resolution on the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the Baltic States. The peaceful resolution of this issue is essential

(Mrs. Fréchette, Canada)

for stability in the region and important for European security. We believe that the text reflects the significance we attach to this question.

After re-establishing their independence, the Baltic States have been working to assert their sovereignty. The continued presence of foreign troops in their territories is a serious impediment to reaching that objective.

We fully support the provisions in the 8 July Final Declaration of the Helsinki Summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and the communiqué of the 4 July meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, reflected in this text, calling for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign troops from the Baltic States.

The draft resolution welcomes recent agreements on the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from Lithuania. Those agreements were a positive step and a sign that this problem from the past was coming to an end. We urge both parties to respect the provisions and timetables established in these agreements; not to respect them would be a step backward.

With regard to the foreign troops in Estonia and Latvia, we urge the parties involved to continue their bilateral discussions and come to an early agreement on their orderly and complete withdrawal. We share the concern expressed in the draft resolution with regard to the continuing absence of such agreements.

We are concerned at the recent announcement suspending the further removal of troops from the Baltic States. Such unilateral actions go against the spirit of the negotiations and undermine the good faith of the parties involved in reaching a permanent solution.

We also believe it is important to avoid the introduction into the discussions on the removal of troops from the Baltic States of issues which

(Mrs. [illegible]échette, Canada)

should be dealt with separately. This only complicates further what is already a complex issue for all parties.

We are sensitive to concerns about fundamental human rights, particularly with respect to minorities, and we welcome the readiness of all parties to pursue solutions through the United Nations and CSCE.

We fully agree with the emphasis in the draft resolution on the use of preventive diplomacy as the most desirable and efficient means to ease tensions before they result in conflict.

In this respect, the draft resolution recognizes that CSCE has a useful role to play. We support the use of CSCE and its mechanisms to address concerns and look for solutions to them before they endanger peace.

Resolving the problem of troop withdrawals now in a peaceful way will not only contribute to increased security and stability in the Baltic region but also be an example for other areas of the world where similar situations exist.

Mr. PANTIRU (Republic of Moldova): The agenda item entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States" brings to the attention of the United Nations and of the international community a very serious and urgent matter.

We fully understand and support Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in their plea. In this respect, our position stems from particular concerns and motivations. The Republic of Moldova is itself confronted with a similar grave problem originating from similar political and historical circumstances: the territory of my country was occupied by, and incorporated into, the former USSR at the same time and on the same illegitimate basis - the infamous 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact - as were the Baltic States.

(Mr. Pantiru, Republic of Moldova)

The Baltic States have demanded United Nations support based, inter alia, on the threat that foreign military forces represent to their internal stability and to the stability of the region as a whole.

Regrettably, my country's current experience shows how tragic the consequences of the presence of such occupation forces can be; it shows that many lives can be lost and that the longer the withdrawal of those forces is delayed, the more difficult the situation becomes. This summer, during the escalation of the conflict provoked by the separatists in the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, the authorities of the self-proclaimed "Transdniestrean Republic" received open support from the 14th Army, which is illegally stationed in Moldova. The military command of that foreign army violated the neutrality it had pledged to observe, issued an ultimatum to the legal Moldovan authorities and directly engaged its units in combat against those authorities.

Before and since those actions by the 14th Army, pledges were made to engage in urgent negotiations and to establish concrete measures for the withdrawal of foreign troops from the territory of the Republic of Moldova. Instead, the Russian 14th Army has worked side by side with the Dniester National Guard to gain control of the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova: the trans-Dniester region. Those well-armed troops outnumber the defending Moldovans.

As my country's Minister of Foreign Affairs pointed out in the Assembly's general debate, the presence of foreign military forces destabilizes the situation in the trans-Dniester territories. Assertions to the effect that the 14th Army could act as a guarantor of peace are strikingly at variance with reality. That army is an army of occupation and a permanent source of tension and conflict.

(Mr. Pantiru, Republic of Moldova)

We understand the reasons why the Baltic States are not in a position to consider themselves fully satisfied with the provisions of the draft resolution before us. We support their view that the draft resolution could be more to the point in terms of urgency and of insisting on an unconditional obligation to withdraw the foreign forces without delay. However, prevailing circumstances and the desire to obtain a consensus have led to a compromise text. We too are motivated by that desire and have joined the consensus. We hope that the essential element of the draft - its dynamic aspects - and good faith and readiness for its implementation will prevail.

We hope that in the very near future and without delay or preconditions, appropriate agreements, including timetables, will be concluded and implemented for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign military forces. Such a development would be most welcome, as it would have a positive impact not only on the Baltic States but on my country as well.

In that context, I would like to recall the repeated appeals of the Republic of Moldova to the United Nations for assistance in achieving the withdrawal of foreign military forces from our territory. The letters of 2 and 20 October 1992 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova addressed to the Secretary-General asked for United Nations observers to the Moldovan-Russian negotiations on the withdrawal of the 14th Army, and for a United Nations mission to assess the human-rights situation in the trans-Dniester part of the Republic of Moldova. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate those requests. We consider our requests to be proof of our openness and our commitment to the ideals of peace, stability, territorial integrity, respect for human rights and all the ideals this Organization stands for.

(Mr. Pantiru, Republic of Moldova)

We consider this debate and the adoption of the draft resolution an important component of preventive diplomacy as outlined in the report of the Secretary-General entitled "An Agenda for Peace". We see the value and importance of the draft resolution not only for the Baltic States but, in a broader context, as a relevant precedent for similar situations facing other newly independent States. To ask for the withdrawal of foreign forces is not an exceptional act. It is rather a legitimate demand, in full agreement with the international norms of civilized conduct which we all profess to respect.

Mr. TATTENBACH (Costa Rica) (interpretation from Spanish): I wish at the very outset to express our solidarity with the Government and the people of the sister republic of Laos in connection with the death of President Kaysone Phomvihane. I convey our condolences also to the bereaved family.

Although geographically distant from the Baltic countries and having no historical or economic links with them, Costa Rica has always identified with their fate because we share their ideals of freedom, sovereignty and independence, which constitute links stronger than any others.

Today again we support those friendly countries. We do so because we fully sympathize with their demand for a total withdrawal of all foreign military forces stationed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania without the consent of the Governments of those States. We consider that the presence of those troops is inadmissible, even though they are not occupation forces and have acted with propriety. It affects both the sovereignty and the security of the State in which they are stationed. To accept them would be like permitting a visitor to bring weapons into our own houses; that would violate our personal dignity. In the case of the Baltic countries, the unauthorized presence of foreign troops runs counter to their national dignity.

(Mr. Tattenbach, Costa Rica)

Let me explain that in our own little country of Costa Rica, which is unarmed and maintains no army, a constitutional provision requires parliamentary permission for the admission of any foreign armed contingent, even in the case of mere overflight of our national territory by a foreign military aircraft. The Costa Rican Government cannot alone grant this permission; only Parliament can do so. Thus, we understand the Baltic countries: the foreign military forces in their territory are an affront, and must be withdrawn without delay.

(Mr. Tattenbach, Costa Rica)

These words, however, should not be taken as criticism of the Russian Federation. The achievements of that State and nation in recent times deserve our deepest admiration and our gratitude. It has deactivated the machinery of a potential global atomic hecatomb; it has made profound democratic changes at home and promoted them in the region; it has allowed its own empire of the past to disintegrate into a series of new, independent States that can look to the future with confidence and optimism: all this makes us believe that the final step on the path towards the total democratization of Eastern Europe - that is, the return of the expeditionary forces - will be taken without difficulty. We have complete confidence in the good faith of the Russian Federation.

The Russian Federation has reached agreement with Lithuania on the date for the total withdrawal of its troops. But this is not the case with Estonia and Latvia, where the withdrawal of troops has been promised but there has been no commitment to a given date, as we have been informed today. We hope that in the future, a date will be set for the withdrawal of foreign troops from those two countries as well.

Costa Rica fully supports the consensus draft resolution contained in document A/47/L.19, which we understand has the support of the States involved - the Baltic States and the Russian Federation. We congratulate those States on their efforts to solve this important question.

Mr. CHIRILA (Romania): The agenda item "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States" highlights an important matter particularly relevant to the territorial integrity and the free and democratic development of newly independent States recognized by the international community and accepted as States Members of the United Nations

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

after the dismantling of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Indeed, it is a matter of high principle and of political importance for every nation and every State fully to exercise its legitimate rights and authority on its own territory. The presence of foreign military forces on the territory of a State without its explicit consent is one of the most serious factors affecting the independence and sovereignty of a State and international stability and security.

Today this is particularly the case for such States as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or the Republic of Moldova. In the context of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), this issue has already been raised and dealt with. In Helsinki, on 10 July 1992, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe expressed its support for the efforts of CSCE member States concerned to solve, in a peaceful manner and through negotiations, the problems left over from the past, such as the stationing of foreign armed forces on the territories of the Baltic States without the required consent of those countries. In line with the basic principles of international law and in order to prevent any possible conflict, the Conference called on the participating States concerned to conclude, without delay, appropriate bilateral agreements, including timetables, for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of such foreign troops.

As a European country from the region concerned, Romania fully supports the Baltic States in their initiative to obtain the assistance of the United Nations and its Member States in such an important matter. We in Romania have every reason to take this problem very seriously. We cannot remain indifferent when we see the Republic of Moldova facing the same problem - indeed, in an aggravated form. In the case of the conflict in the eastern

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

part of the Republic of Moldova, we have witnessed how foreign troops supporting separatist forces can be a destabilizing factor.

On different occasions, pledges have been made to reach an agreement and take concrete measures for the complete withdrawal of the foreign military forces from the Republic of Moldova. In the joint communiqué adopted in Istanbul on 25 June 1992 by the Presidents of the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation and Ukraine on the occasion of their participation in the Conference of States from the Black Sea region, the four Heads of State stated, inter alia:

> "The neutrality of the 14th Army will be secured. The status of the Army and the time and procedure for its withdrawal will be determined in the course of the negotiations to begin in the very near future between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Moldova".

The lack of progress in this respect motivated the Republic of Moldova to ask the United Nations to assist by, inter alia, sending observers to the Moldovan-Russian negotiations concerning the withdrawal of the 14th Army.

As for the draft resolution before us in document A/47/L.19, we are aware that efforts have been exerted to make it acceptable to everybody concerned. We would favour a more streamlined approach in addressing the issue in point. But it is a consensus document, which increases significantly its political and practical value. We hope that good faith and a sense of urgency will prevail in its implementation.

We consider the draft resolution that is to be adopted as an important step in the context of the preventive-diplomacy efforts of the United Nations and its Member States. The draft resolution sends a clear message about every situation of foreign military presence on the territories of other States

(Mr. Chirila, Romania)

without the required consent of those States. Our delegation is ready to join the consensus for the adoption of the draft resolution contained in document A/47/L.19.

Mr. GHAFOORZAI (Afghanistan): The delegation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan takes a special interest in agenda item 139, "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States", because Afghanistan itself suffered extensively from the consequences of foreign military intervention and the illegal presence of foreign military forces in the country, which continued for more than nine long years and was accompanied by enormous destruction and grave violations of human rights.

(Mr. Ghafoorzai, Afghanistan)

The presence of any foreign troops in any territory against the wishes and aspirations of its people is incompatible with the rules of international law and the principles that govern international relations. Therefore, it is inadmissible and unjustifiable.

The presence of foreign military forces in the territories of the Baltic States cannot be an exception to the foregoing principles. It should be viewed as contradicting internationally accepted principles such as respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of the Baltic States.

The collapse of the former Soviet Union and the emergence of the Russian Federation and the independent States which comprised the former Soviet Union has contributed to the creation of a sound and responsive atmosphere in the bilateral relations of the countries constituting the former Soviet Union, on the one hand, and the Baltic States, on the other.

We believe both sides should try to benefit from the emergence of such an atmosphere for the sake of peace and tranquillity in the region and in the world at large, as well as for the benefit of friendship and cooperation between the peoples of the Baltic States and of the Russian Federation, thus contributing to the further strengthening of world peace and stability.

We are pleased to see democratic means being given a chance to lead the peoples of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to freedom.

The delegation of Afghanistan welcomes the recent agreements, as well as the bilateral talks, on the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. We are of the opinion that if the cooperation, mutual trust and understanding are sincere, the parties concerned could enable the Secretary-General of the United Nations to

(Mr. Ghafoorzai, Afghanistan)

strive to fulfil the objectives of the draft resolution submitted on the item, which is contained in document A/47/L.19.

The delegation of Afghanistan supports the draft resolution and expresses the hope that the use of preventive diplomacy will set an example by solving the question under consideration through peaceful means.

Mr. NOBILO (Croatia): The 17th of September 1991 was one of those great and important days in the history of the United Nations. It was the day when the new political, as well as the old historical, realities of the Baltics were finally justly recognized through the granting of full United Nations membership to the Republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. It was a giant step towards the new post-cold-war world order and a harbinger that many other nations would soon achieve their independence and sovereignty. Eight months later the Republic of Croatia, together with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia, also became Members of the United Nations.

There is not the smallest doubt that the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia must be fully respected and, if necessary, protected by the world community. Without the approval of the host State, no foreign troops can be situated within its internationally recognized boundaries. The Baltic States cannot be an exception to this rule, which is the pillar of regional and global stability. Therefore, Croatia supports the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Any serious delay in this process, contrary to the agreed timetable, would jeopardize the basic principles for which this Organization stands. The positive experience of the withdrawal of foreign troops from other Eastern European countries should serve as the guideline for the Baltic States as well.

(Mr. Nobilo, Croatia)

Parallel to the problem of the foreign military presence in the Baltics, some serious questions are emerging relating to the protection of human rights in that area. It is our opinion that these two problems must be separated and cannot be considered in the same context. All the existing human rights questions in the Baltic States - especially the problems concerning minorities - must be considered and resolved without rattling military sabres. The presence of foreign troops within the territory of a sovereign State, in the name of protecting their social, ethnic, linguistic and religious rights, or those of minorities, cannot be justified on the grounds of any effort to promote human rights. These questions have to be resolved through the international political process and legislation, with full respect for international norms and standards for human rights, and in close cooperation with the relevant international institutions and bodies.

Croatia firmly supports the view that preventive diplomacy is the most desirable and efficient means to ease tensions and achieve just and lasting solutions. Unfortunately, preventive diplomacy failed in the Balkans. In the territory of the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina recent history has taught us a cruel lesson about how horrible crimes can be committed in the name of protecting someone's human rights. We must not forget that Serbia, alleging that the rights of the Serbian people in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina were being violated, used its military presence in the territories of these two States Members of the United Nations to launch brutal aggression designed to seize as much of their land as possible.

(Mr. Nobilo, Croatia)

The easing of tensions that could create new regional crises or expand existing ones is today one of the major goals of the work of the United Nations. In the light of that effort two major principles must be adhered to. The first is full respect for and protection of human and minority rights; the second is the full and unconditional withdrawal of uninvited foreign military forces from the territory of sovereign Members of the United Nations. The violation of one of these principles cannot justify impeding the application of the other.

By supporting the draft resolution, before the Assembly, we are urging all the sides - the Baltic States and the Russian Federation - to proceed in the direction of finding mutually acceptable and peaceful solutions, without linking two different processes, and thus helping to strengthen European and global security.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/47/L.19.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt this draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/47/L.19 was adopted (resolution 47/21).

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 139?

It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 18 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

(a) REPORT OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE SITUATION WITH REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES (A/47/23; A/AC.109/1097-A/AC.109/1106, A/AC.109/1108-A/AC.109/1113, A/AC.109/1116-A/AC/109/1120, A/AC/109/1123-A/AC.109/1125)

(b) REPORTS OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/47/506, A/47/649)

(c) DRAFT RESOLUTIONS (A/47/L.16/Rev.1, A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18)

(d) REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (A/47/711)

The PRESIDENT: May I remind representatives that the debate on this item was held at the 61st plenary meeting, on 16 November.

(The President)

The General Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/47/L.16/Rev.1, A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18.

I should like to inform the Assembly that the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has become a sponsor of draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes before the voting. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. COLLIER (United Kingdom): Once again, I regret that my delegation will find it necessary to vote against the draft resolutions on the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/47/L.17) and on the dissemination of information on decolonization (A/47/L.18).

In my delegation's statement in the Fourth Committee and in its various explanations of vote and of position in that forum, we indicated that we are strongly opposed to the outdated ideas and language that year after year fill the text of many of the draft resolutions and decisions on decolonization. In particular, we strongly object to the assumption that self-determination automatically equates with independence, ignoring the existence of other options, and to references to issues irrelevant to decolonization such as military activities or apartheid.

The two draft resolutions submitted to the General Assembly, like their predecessors of the last year and many years before, do nothing to reflect world realities. Worse still, they do nothing to advance the wishes of the people of the remaining dependent Territories, and it remains the foundation of my Government's policies that their wishes should be advanced.

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (interpretation from Russian): The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples has made an enormous contribution to the process of liberating colonial peoples. That process is now nearing completion, in the light of the fact that today there are about 20 Non-Self-Governing Territories in the world, most of them small ones. We deplore the fact that despite the efforts made in informal negotiations by our delegation and other delegations, the changes that have taken place in the world are not duly reflected in draft resolution A/47/L.17 and that it still contains outmoded formulations relating to apartheid in South Africa and to nuclear cooperation with South Africa, which are, moreover, outside the scope of the question under consideration.

In view of the foregoing, the Russian delegation will be compelled to abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/47/L.17.

The Russian delegation would like once again to express its hope that in the work of United Nations bodies dealing with the problems of decolonization, the prevailing desire will be to adopt agreed decisions relating directly to the remaining colonial and dependent territories.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/47/L.16/Rev.1, A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18. The report of the Fifth Committee on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 is contained in document A/47/711.

The Assembly will first take a decision on draft resolution A/47/L.16/Rev.1, "Cooperation and coordination of the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations in their assistance to Non-Self-Governing Territories".

May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to adopt draft resolution A/47/L.16/Rev.1?

Draft resolution A/47/L.16/Rev.1 was adopted (resolution 47/22).

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now vote on draft resolution A/47/L.17, "Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining: Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine

Draft resolution A/47/L.17 was adopted by 127 votes to 2, with 22 abstentions (resolution 47/23).*

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* Subsequently, the delegations of Cape Verde and Jordan advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will next vote on draft resolution A.47/L.18, "Dissemination of information on decolonization".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovenia

Draft resolution A/47/L.18 was adopted by 132 votes to 2, with 17 abstentions (resolution 47/24).*

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* Subsequently, the delegations of Cape Verde and Jordan advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes. May I remind delegations that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Ms. KERR (New Zealand): New Zealand has just voted in favour of draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18, on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and on the dissemination of information on decolonization. These votes are consistent with New Zealand's constant support for the principles of decolonization.

It is unfortunate that a number of the draft resolutions on decolonization attract declining, rather than increasing, support. That was certainly true of several of the other decolonization texts adopted earlier this session by the General Assembly. The continued reference in draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 to matters that are not relevant to the remaining decolonization issues is a matter New Zealand very much regrets. In our delegation's view, the references in them to apartheid and South Africa are misplaced and serve to detract from the decolonization principles that lie at their heart. We trust that next year the Committee of 24 will make further efforts to produce texts that command broad support.

Ms. ADAMSON (Australia): My delegation has just voted in favour of the draft resolutions contained in documents A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and on the dissemination of information on decolonization.

These positive votes reflect our strong support for a continuing United Nations role in the decolonization process, particularly as a number of the

(Ms. Adamson, Australia)

remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories are our near neighbours - small islands in the South Pacific.

But this United Nations role must be constantly reviewed and fine-tuned to ensure that it remains relevant to the particular circumstances of the Territories listed for our consideration. The recycling each year of language which is unbalanced, misplaced, and/or anachronistic does no service to the peoples of the Territories, undermines the standing and credibility of the United Nations decolonization processes, and is a source of dismay to long-standing supporters of the work of the United Nations in this area, like Australia.

The inclusion in draft resolution A/47/L.17 of strong condemnation of nuclear collaboration with the Government of South Africa after the conclusion of a safeguards agreement between that Government and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and subsequent IAEA inspection of South Africa's nuclear facilities is a particularly glaring example of the problems my delegation has with these texts.

My delegation therefore calls on the Special Committee to take a fresh and more rigorous look at these draft resolutions next year with a view to retaining the support of the Assembly for its work and in the interests of the colonial peoples whose progress towards self-determination we are charged to oversee.

Mr. FIFE (Norway): The Norwegian delegation voted in favour of draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples and on the dissemination of information on decolonization.

However, the Norwegian delegation has expressed its reservations and disappointment regarding the outdated language used in paragraph 9 of draft

(Mr. Fife, Norway)

resolution A/47/L.17, in view of South Africa's accession to the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty and its subsequent signing of a safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This matter is, moreover, not relevant to the issues of decolonization that are considered under agenda item 18.

Mr. RIBEIRO TELLES (Portugal): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolutions A/47/L.17 and A/47/L.18, which reaffirm basic principles and contain important provisions that we fully endorse. None the less, I must express my delegation's reservations about some formulations and continued reference to apartheid in South Africa in the context of decolonization matters.

Portugal considers that the process of decolonization is one of the historic achievements of the United Nations, and we hope that this process can soon be successfully completed in accordance with the Charter and the fundamental principles and resolutions of the Organization. What we are facing now is the settlement of the questions pertaining to the last Non-Self-Governing Territories still existing in the last decade of the twentieth century, a decade devoted by the United Nations to the eradication of colonialism.

It is against this background that I should like to recall Portugal's continuous collaboration with the United Nations in its capacity as the administering Power responsible for the Non-Self-Governing Territory of East Timor, whose decolonization process is, unfortunately, still awaiting completion, in spite of all the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Portugal is convinced that the recent resumption of talks with Indonesia and all the other parties directly involved, under the auspices of the

(Mr. Ribeiro Telles, Portugal)

Secretary-General, is an important step in the right direction, and we sincerely hope that these talks will lead to a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable solution to the question of East Timor.

Ms. SUNDH (Sweden): In view of South Africa's accession to the non-proliferation Treaty and its subsequent signing of the safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Swedish delegation very much regrets the inclusion in its present form of paragraph 9 in draft resolution A/47/L.17. However, bearing in mind our long-standing support for the decolonization process and the right of all peoples in Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination, Sweden voted in favour of the draft resolution, in spite of our objections to that paragraph.

The PRESIDENT: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats. I call on the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. JENIE (Indonesia): In response to the statement made by the representative of Portugal in connection with the explanation of his vote on draft resolutions A/47/L.16, L.17 and L.18, my delegation is constrained to take the floor briefly in exercise of its right of reply.

Let me first of all reiterate the fact that 17 years ago the people of East Timor freely exercised their legitimate right to self-determination in full accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV). In this regard, the outcome reflected the clear and undeniable desire of the

(Mr. Jenie, Indonesia)

East Timorese to choose independence through integration of the Territory of East Timor with Indonesia.

Secondly, Portugal, in asserting its position as the administering Power, has failed to take note of the historical facts of the decolonization process of East Timor. It should be recalled that in August 1975 the colonial authorities in Dili, in a most irresponsible manner, simply abandoned East Timor after allowing the situation in the Territory to deteriorate to the point of civil war; they utterly mishandled the decolonization process, and in their so doing Portugal in effect relinquished its responsibility as the administering Power.

Thus, the historical facts speak for themselves. The East Timorese people then assumed their legitimate right to determine their own destiny in full accordance with the relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Finally, claiming that it supports the dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General to seek an internationally acceptable solution of the so-called question of East Timor, Portugal is carrying on its campaign to malign Indonesia in every available forum. There is no doubt that such actions undermine a favourable atmosphere for the talks which will be held between the Foreign Minister of Indonesia and Portugal next month. Indonesia, for its part, remains committed to the dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

Mr. RIBEIRO TELLES (Portugal): I wish to make some brief remarks on what the representative of Indonesia has just said concerning the question of East Timor.

I remind the representative of Indonesia that the question of East Timor has been on the Assembly's agenda for more than 15 years now. This means that

(Mr. Ribeiro Telles, Portugal)

this Organization and the international community have never recognized the decolonization process of East Timor as having been completed.

So far Indonesia has prevented the people of East Timor from freely choosing their political future, in violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council.

I should also like to point out that Indonesia has systematically tried to divert attention from its most serious responsibility for the appalling situation that has obtained in the Territory and for the central issue of completing the decolonization process there, by putting all the blame on Portugal and on the past colonial policies of previous Portuguese Governments regarding East Timor.

The East Timorese people, like any other colonial people, cannot end up finding themselves paying for any faults or shortcomings of their colonial rulers. This would be absurd, and in blatant contradiction of the principles and norms that the United Nations stands for.

Portugal has no territorial claims whatsoever over East Timor, and our policy has been guided solely by the objective of upholding, in accordance with the Charter and resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV), the inalienable rights of the East Timorese people.

Mr. JENIE (Indonesia): As we have already asserted in our statement, the process of decolonization of East Timor was carried out in accordance with the Charter and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, thus terminating the colonial status of the former Territory; subsequently, the integration of East Timor into the Republic of Indonesia was formalized on 17 July 1976, with East Timor being its twenty-seventh Province, with rights and obligations equal to those of the other Provinces.

(Mr. Jenie, Indonesia)

In this regard, it is pertinent to note that there is growing international recognition of the decision of the people of East Timor to become independent through integration with Indonesia. This is reflected in the votes of Member States at the thirty-seventh session of the General Assembly on the draft resolution submitted by Portugal on the so-called "Question of East Timor", which was passed by a margin of only two votes: a total of 96 countries voted against or abstained, while only a small majority, 50 countries, voted in favour of the Portuguese resolution.

At each subsequent annual session since 1983 discussion of this item has been deferred, as efforts to find an acceptable solution to the question have moved into a process of dialogue between Portugal and Indonesia under the auspices of the Secretary-General.

In other international forums, too, the question of East Timor has ceased to be an issue, reflecting the growing understanding in the international community of the true circumstances surrounding the process of decolonization and the actual situation in the Province.

Since integration Indonesia's sincere intent to give substance to the freedom won by the people of East Timor has been clearly reflected in its continuous efforts towards the accelerated development of the Province in all spheres of life - economic, political and social - as well as the protection of cultural and religious rights, which had never been enjoyed by its people under 400 years of colonial rule.

Mr. RIBEIRO TELLES (Portugal): My remarks will be very brief. I wish only to remind the representative of Indonesia once again that the question of East Timor is on the agenda both of the General Assembly and of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of

(Mr. Ribeiro Telles, Portugal)

the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

No act of "free choice" undertaken by the Indonesian authorities in the Territory have ever been accepted by this Organization, which has reaffirmed the right of the East Timorese people to self-determination.

Indonesia has failed so far to comply with the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions that called upon it to withdraw, without delay, all its forces from the Territory that it has been occupying illegally since its invasion in December 1975.

Finally, we should like to reiterate our hope that the resumption of the talks under the auspices of the Secretary-General will open the way to real progress towards an internationally acceptable settlement of the question of East Timor.

AGENDA ITEM 18 (continued)

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES: REPORT OF THE FOURTH COMMITTEE (A/47/648)

The PRESIDENT: We shall now consider the report (A/47/648) of the Fourth Committee on agenda item 18, concerning chapters of the report of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples relating to specific Territories not covered by other agenda items.

I request the Rapporteur of the Fourth Committee to introduce the Committee's report.

Mr. AL-BAKER (Qatar), Rapporteur of the Fourth Committee (interpretation from Arabic): I have the honour to present to the General Assembly for its consideration the final report of the Fourth Committee relating to agenda item 18. Now that we are about to conclude the work of the Committee as best we can, we hope we have accomplished our duty satisfactorily. This would not have been possible without the spirit of cooperation that prevailed in the Committee.

The report contained in document A/47/648 relates to those Territories that were not covered by other items of the agenda, which the Committee took up under agenda item 18. Set out in the report are three draft resolutions concerning Western Sahara and New Caledonia and the consolidated resolution on American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Monteserrat, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands, the United States Virgin Islands; two draft consensuses relating to Gibraltar and Pitcairn; and one draft decision on St. Helena.

By adopting these proposals, the General Assembly would, among other things, reaffirm the inalienable right of the people of those Territories to self-determination and independence and that, at the end of the day, it is up to the people of those Territories themselves freely to determine their future political status in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

By adopting the proposals, the Assembly would request the administering Powers concerned to take all possible measures to expedite the process of decolonization and also urge them to continue or to resume their participation in the work of the Special Committee. It would also urge the administering Powers to accelerate the social and economic development of those Territories

(Mr. Al-Baker, Rapporteur, Fourth Committee)

with the assistance of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system.

The Assembly would once again emphasize the importance of dispatching United Nations visiting missions to Non-Self-Governing Territories so as to enable the United Nations to be fully apprised of the conditions prevailing in those Territories.

As regards Western Sahara, the General Assembly would inter alia reiterate its support for the deployment of further efforts by the Secretary-General for the organization and supervision by the United Nations, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, of a referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in conformity with resolutions 658 (1990) and 690 (1991), by which the Security Council adopted the settlement plan for Western Sahara.

In recalling with satisfaction the entry into force of the cease-fire in Western Sahara on 6 September 1991, in accordance with the proposal of the Secretary-General accepted by the two sides, the General Assembly would endorse the contents of the letter dated 31 August 1992 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General by which the members of the Council shared the views of the Secretary-General on the necessity of the two parties scrupulously abiding by the cease-fire and abstaining from any provocative action that would endanger the settlement plan and expressed their hope that both parties would cooperate fully with the Secretary-General and the Special Representative in their efforts to achieve speedy progress in the implementation of the plan and make extraordinary efforts to ensure the plan's success.

(Mr. Al-Baker, Rapporteur, Fourth Committee)

Further, the Assembly would invite the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution.

With respect to New Caledonia, in noting the importance of the positive measures being taken in that Territory by the French authorities, in cooperation with all sectors of the population, in order to provide a framework for the territory's peaceful progress to self-determination, the Assembly would urge all the parties involved, in the interest of all the people of New Caledonia, to continue their dialogue in a spirit of harmony. The Assembly would also invite all the parties involved to continue their search for a framework for the peaceful progress of the Territory towards an act of self-determination in which all options would be open and which would safeguard the rights of all New Caledonians.

On behalf of the Fourth Committee I should like to commend the report to the attention of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, I should like to thank the Chairman of the Fourth Committee, Mr. Guillermo Melendez-Barahona of El Salvador, and the two Vice-Chairmen, Mr. James Kember of New Zealand and Mr. Ulli Mwambulukutu of the United Republic of Tanzania, for the cooperation and advice they extended to me during the session, which facilitated my task as Rapporteur of the Fourth Committee.

I should also like to express my gratitude to the members of the Fourth Committee for their cooperation and assistance during the session.

The PRESIDENT: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fourth Committee before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Before we begin to take action on the recommendations contained in the report of the Fourth Committee, I should like to advise representatives that, unless delegations have already notified the Secretariat otherwise, we shall proceed with the voting in the same manner as in the Fourth Committee. This means that where a recorded vote was taken in the Committee, we will do the same.

I also hope that we may proceed to adopt without a vote those recommendations that were adopted without a vote in the Fourth Committee.

The Assembly will now proceed to take decisions on the various recommendations of the Fourth Committee. I shall put the recommendations to the Assembly one by one. After all the decisions have been taken, representatives will again have the opportunity to explain their votes.

We turn first to the three draft resolutions recommended by the Fourth Committee in paragraph 24 of its report (A/47/648).

Draft resolution I is entitled "Question of Western Sahara".

The Fourth Committee adopted draft resolution I without a vote. May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution I was adopted (resolution A/47/25).

The PRESIDENT: Draft resolution II is entitled "Question of New Caledonia".

The Fourth Committee adopted draft resolution II without objection. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft resolution II was adopted (resolution A/47/26).

The PRESIDENT: Draft resolution III is entitled "Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Tokelau, Turks and Caicos Islands and United States Virgin Islands".

The Fourth Committee adopted this draft resolution without objection. May I consider that the Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft resolution III was adopted (resolution A/47/27).

The PRESIDENT: I now invite representatives to turn to the two draft consensuses recommended by the Fourth Committee in paragraph 25 of its report (A/47/648).

Draft consensus I is entitled "Question of Gibraltar".

The Fourth Committee adopted draft consensus I without objection. May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

Draft consensus I was adopted.

The PRESIDENT: Draft consensus II is entitled "Question of Pitcairn".

The Fourth Committee also adopted draft consensus II without objection. May I consider that the General Assembly wishes to do likewise?

Draft consensus II was adopted.

The PRESIDENT: We turn next to the draft decision entitled "Question of Saint Helena", recommended by the Fourth Committee in paragraph 26 of its report (A/47/648).

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining: Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine

The draft decision was adopted by 104 votes to 2, with 43 abstentions.*

The PRESIDENT: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 18?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded our consideration of all the reports of the Fourth Committee.

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* Subsequently, the delegations of Afghanistan, Jordan and Namibia advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.

AGENDA ITEM 112

PERSONNEL QUESTIONS: REPORT OF THE FIFTH COMMITTEE (PART I) (A/47/708)

The PRESIDENT: I call on the rapporteur of the Fifth Committee to introduce the report of the Fifth Committee.

Mr. OSELLA (Argentina), Rapporteur of the Fifth Committee (interpretation from Spanish): It is an honour for me to introduce to the General Assembly Part I of the report (A/47/708) of the Fifth Committee on agenda item 112, "Personnel questions". As is mentioned in paragraph 2 of the report, the Committee considered the item at its 13th, 15th to 17th, 19th to 22nd, 25th and 28th meetings.

(Mr. Osella, Rapporteur, Fifth Committee)

At the 28th meeting, following informal consultations, the representative of the Netherlands, on behalf of the Chairman of the Committee, introduced draft resolution A/C.5/47/L.2, entitled "Respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations".

At the same meeting, the Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution without a vote.

In paragraph 6 of its report (A/47/708), the Fifth Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of that draft resolution.

The PRESIDENT: If there is no proposal under rule 66 of the rules of procedure, I shall take it that the General Assembly decides not to discuss the report of the Fifth Committee that is before the Assembly today.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: Statements will therefore be limited to explanations of vote.

The positions of delegations regarding the recommendation of the Fifth Committee have been made clear in the Committee and are reflected in the relevant official records.

I remind members that in its decision 34/401 the General Assembly agreed that

> "When the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, i.e., either in the Committee or in plenary meeting unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee". (decision 34/401, para. 7)

(The President)

May I remind delegations that, also in accordance with decision 34/401, explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

I should like to advise representatives that we are going to proceed to take a decision in the same manner as was done in the Fifth Committee.

The Fifth Committee adopted the draft resolution entitled "Respect for the privileges and immunities of officials of the United Nations and the specialized agencies and related organizations" without objection. May I take it that the General Assembly wishes to do the same?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 47/28).

The PRESIDENT: I call on the representative of the United Kingdom, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position.

Ms. SLATER (United Kingdom): The European Community and its member States are pleased that the draft resolution contained in the report (A/47/708) of the Fifth Committee has been adopted without a vote by the General Assembly. We believe that this resolution addresses an extremely serious problem and we call on all Member States to ensure the safety and security of all United Nations personnel on their territory, and to respect the privileges and immunities of that personnel.

It is our understanding that the provisions of this resolution invite the Secretary-General to submit a report on this matter and to ask the views of the General Assembly whenever he deems it appropriate.

The PRESIDENT: We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 112.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.